

Possible Regulations for Retreats

Classification – Minimal Impact Facility – Permitted by Special Exception in all zones except the MHP, LI and HI zones, where they are not permitted.

Definition: Retreat – A facility owned and operated by a non-governmental entity for the purpose of providing a rural setting in which temporary lodging, camping and/or conferences, meeting, and event facilities are provided with or without compensation. This definition does not include those activities allowed by the Zoning Ordinance with a temporary use permit (i.e. outdoor performances or seasonal attractions).

1. An application for a retreat shall include a concept plan and a complete description of all activities proposed to occur on the property that shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
 - The number of events per year;
 - The expected number of attendees per event;
 - The number of employees;
 - The hours of operation;
 - Provision of overnight accommodations, duration, etc.;
 - Provision of restroom facilities;
 - Proposed lighting;
 - Sound amplification to be used;
 - Temporary structures or tents to be used in association with planned events;
 - Proposed Signage;
 - Security to be provided;
 - Location of trash receptacles;
 - Traffic management and parking plans;
 - Other documentation as required.

2. The following standards shall apply for retreats:
 - Minimum acreage – 10 acres

 - Parcels must have an unobstructed frontage along a public road consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Access drives on private easements will not be permitted.

 - Site plan approval is required consistent with Section 1404 C. of this Ordinance.

 - The maximum floor area for all areas used in connection with the Retreat (excluding areas for overnight accommodations) shall be no greater than 20,000 square feet.

- Accessory uses can include, but are not limited to; banquet facilities and recreational amenities not intended to be open to the general public.
- Uses approved in this Section shall abide by the Parking Requirements found in Section 1102 of this Ordinance. Parking areas are not required to be of a hard-surfaced, dustless material but must be approved by Planning and Engineering Staff. If an agreement cannot be reached with Staff, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall have the authority to determine the surface material to be used. Handicapped parking is required to be of a hard, dustless material and must meet ADA standards.
- The maximum length of stay for any guest(s) shall be fourteen (14) consecutive days.
- The Board of Zoning Appeals has the ability to condition approval upon adequate landscape screening on a case-by-case basis.
- Events shall conform to the performance standards in Section 1106 of this Ordinance.
- Signage shall comply with Chapter 12 of this Ordinance.
- Proposed and existing structures to be used in connection with the Retreat shall comply with the adopted building and fire codes for Rutherford County and shall be inspected prior to occupancy by the Building and Codes and Fire and Rescue Departments for Rutherford County.
- All regulations enforced through other agencies, (i.e. Federal, State, and other Local authorities) must be met. These include, but are not limited to, building codes, fire codes, health department regulations, groundwater protection, etc.
- If the retreat is proposed on property with an existing structure or residence, an additional address may have to be assigned for the retreat for E-911 purposes.
- All parking, buildings, activities, etc. used in association with the rural retreat must be setback at least 100 feet from all property lines.
- Parking Requirements: 1 space for every 3 people at maximum capacity of the main assembly room plus one space for every guestroom or campsite.